

# Groove Construction Displacement: Part 2

by Wayne Katz

Ask any young drumming student to come up with an interesting 4 bar groove and many, if not most, will look give you nothing but a "rabbit in your headlights" frozen stare. The idea with this **groove construction** series is to give drummers some sure-fire steps to come up with their *own* interesting, musical ideas. Check it out...

In *Displacement: Part 1* we looked at displacing one or two notes from a groove to create a more syncopated 2 bar groove with a **Question and Answer** feeling to it. In this installment we'll be moving whole phrases. This is a powerful groove construction tool and will result in very characterisitic and unclined drum parts. Beware though, the resulting grooves may not always be too popular with your band mates or audiences and will quite often be less than 'radio friendly'. However, if you want to unleash your musicianship and expand on your drumming skills. Read on...

In Ex 1 below, the highlighted phrase in bar 1 (including the snare) has been moved or delayed by an eighth note in bar 2 so that it now starts on the '&' of beat 3. Ex 2 uses the same idea but the phrase has been moved to the preceding eighth note. In both cases I've filled up the resulting 'holes' by adding ghosted snares, but bass drums, toms and fills can all work well here.

Ex 1: ♪ later

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Ex 2: ♪ earlier

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Ex 3 and 4 adopt the same process, but this time the phrase is only moved by a sixteenth note. This time I've ornamented the 'holes' with hihat played with the left hand. Notice that in these the examples the original phrase is now almost unrecognisable in the second bar as all down-beats have become up-beats and vice-versa.

NOTE: These can be rather tricky to play at first especially when trying to pull them off by 'ear'. Try to think mechanically at first, paying attention to how the displaced kick and snare phrase will relate to the hihat part in terms of *ups* and *downs* - be strict with that. Remember, you can't try to play something by 'feel' before you know *how* it 'feels'.

Ex 3: ♪ later

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

R R L  
& a

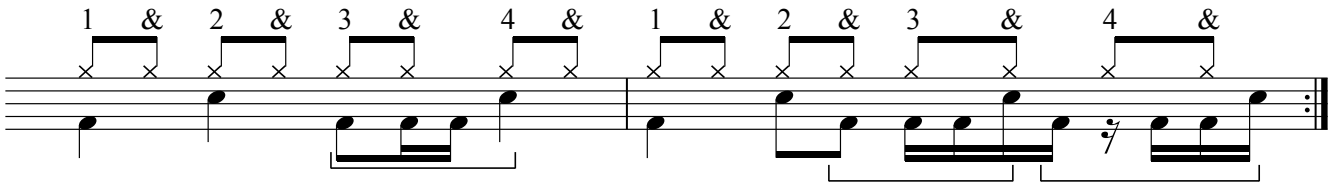
Ex 4: ♪ earlier

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

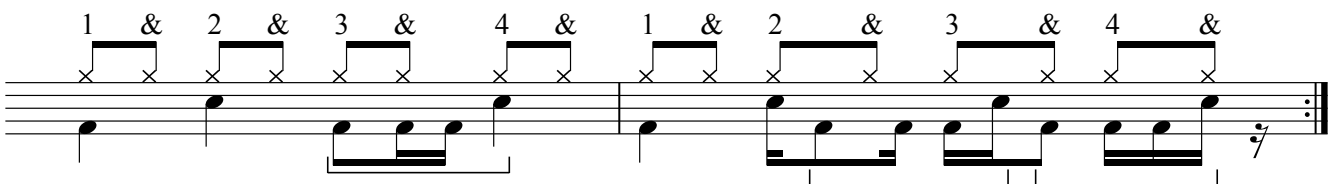
R L R L  
e & a

We can further this concept by moving the phrase by a dotted eighth (3 sixteens) in either direction and/or by using the phrase twice in the second bar as in Ex 5 and 6 below. In other words we're using the phrase twice in bar 2 to fill up the 'hole' created by moving the original phrase.

Ex 5: ♪ earlier + ♪ later

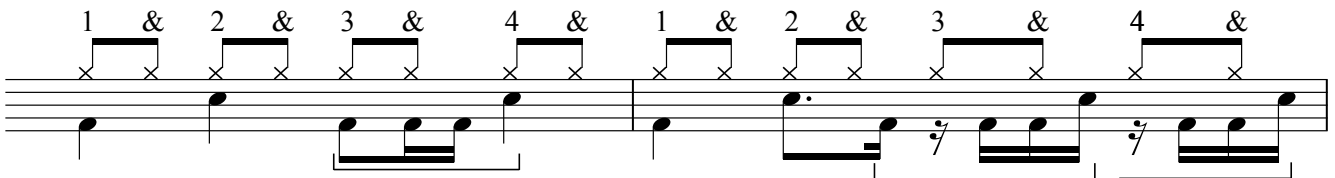


Ex 6: ♪ earlier + ♪ later



In some cases there won't be enough space to fit an entire phrase in twice, but adding just part of the phrase can be really effective (you could also extend the phrase over the barline, but that's a whole different lesson). As long as there is some repetition, you're likely to end up with an interesting groove. Check out Ex 7 to see what I mean.

Ex 7: ♪ earlier + part of phrase



As mentioned earlier, the original phrase will become unrecognisable to most listeners once down-beats become up-beats and vice versa. This can be great but in some cases it's desirable to have the listener recognise the phrase in it's new position. If your bass player, for instance, also moves his or her accompanying phrase, it'll make the displaced phrase more recognisable and the groove sound more deliberate - any melodic elements will do this including tom melodies.

The idea with all of this is to become comfortable with using the displacement technique. This will greatly add to your value as a drummer because you'll become a strong contributor to any songwriting you're involved in instead of just being a time keeper. The only way to do that is to get better at it is to apply it to many different grooves. Try to do it on the fly without writing anything down, but if you struggle, by all means, grab a pencil!  
Happy groove constructing!